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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KHARTOUM 000549

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SE GRATION, S/USSES, AF A A/S, AF/C, AF/E
NSC FOR MGA VIN AND CHUDSON
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ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

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TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: SENATOR KERRY'S MEETINGS WITH VICE PRESIDENT TAHA
AND NISS DIRECTOR GHOSH

REF: A. KHARTOUM 548
[B](#). KHARTOUM 539
[C](#). KHARTOUM 538
[D](#). KHARTOUM 537

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Vice President Taha received Senator Kerry at his home in Khartoum April 16 and confirmed the NCP's commitment to a tripartite mechanism to implement the CPA as discussed during the SE Gration visit. However, Taha seemed to backpedal somewhat (noting the existence of other mechanisms such as the AEC) and requested that the U.S. be more even-handed with the CPA parties and publicly support the unity of Sudan. Kerry pressed on the tripartite mechanism following the meeting and the Vice President confirmed that the NCP would support it, which allowed Senator Kerry to announce the tripartite mechanism publicly at a televised press conference outside of Taha's house. On Darfur, Taha said that the NCP is eager to make peace and requested U.S. assistance in this regard, recalling that at the Abuja peace talks the U.S. had promised to punish those parties who did not adhere to or sign the Darfur Peace Agreement. Taha said there could be peace in Darfur as long as the U.S. engages fully with all sides. Following the meeting with VP Taha, NISS Director Salah Ghosh told Kerry that ending the cross-border attacks between Sudan and Chad is the key to ending the Darfur conflict. He said that if Chad and Libya are pressed to cut off support to the JEM rebels, Sudan will cut off support to Chadian rebels. Ghosh said that Chadian President Deby must be pushed to engage with the opposition in his country rather than trying to eliminate them. Ghosh ended the meeting by promising to fully implement the agreement reached with SE Gration on humanitarian assistance in Darfur. Following a private meeting with Senator Kerry, Ghosh hosted a large dinner in honor of the Senator on the lawn of NISS headquarters, with musicians and dancers as a backdrop. End summary.

Taha Reluctant on Tripartite Mechanism

[1](#)2. (C) Vice President Ali Osman Taha warmly welcomed Senator Kerry and delegation at his home in Khartoum the evening of April 16. Taha expressed the strong desire of the Sudanese government for improved relations with the U.S., noting that the U.S. had good relations with previous Sudanese governments (such as the Nimeiry regime) and said there is no reason why good relations should not be possible again. Taha said the Obama administration has opportunity to show that

the U.S. would like to engage positively with the Islamic world, and that Islam has not replaced communism as the ideological opponent of the West and the U.S. Taha noted that the U.S. was key to the negotiation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, but requested that the U.S. be more even handed in its negotiations with the CPA parties, not taking the side of one party as it did with the SPLA at the CPA negotiations in Naivasha. Taha also requested that the U.S. publicly embrace the spirit of the CPA which calls for the unity of Sudan.

13. (C) Senator Kerry replied that the U.S. is eager to engage directly with Sudan and the CPA parties to ensure that the peace agreement does not fall apart. Kerry noted that the CPA is the foundation of the current political framework in Sudan, but said that important milestones such as the elections and the referendum must be achieved. Kerry noted that SE Gration had discussed the creation of a tripartite mechanism between the CPA parties and the U.S. to resolve any differences in the implementation of the agreement, and expressed his support for this mechanism. Kerry noted that the North-South border must be demarcated and the referendum law must be approved. Taha agreed that the CPA parties must move forward with these CPA elements but noted that there are existing mechanisms such as the Assessment and Evaluation Commission which address implementation. (Note: Following the meeting, as Senator Kerry was preparing his statement to the media about the GOS' acceptance of the tripartite mechanism that would allow SE Gration to engage with the CPA parties, Senator Kerry confirmed with VP Taha that the NCP accepts the notion of the mechanism in principle. This allowed Senator Kerry to announce the agreement publicly in his statement outside of Taha's home. End note.)

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14. (C) On Darfur, Taha said that the government is ready to make peace and requested U.S. assistance with the Darfur movements. Taha expressed confidence that a peace agreement is possible, but noted that the U.S. must live up to its commitment to press evenly on all sides. He pointed out that at the DPA negotiations in Abuja, in order to convince the GOS to sign the agreement, the U.S. promised to punish those movements that did not sign or refused to implement the DPA. Taha said that the DPA fell apart due to lack of follow through not only by the government of Sudan, but also by the U.S. and the international community. Taha pointed out that in order to solve Darfur there must also be internal reconciliation among the tribes of Darfur and the Sudan-Chad relationship must be repaired.

Ghosh Requests U.S. Pressure on Chad and Libya

15. (C) Following the meeting with VP Taha, NISS Director Salah Ghosh welcomed Senator Kerry and delegation for a lengthy meeting followed by an outdoor dinner at NISS headquarters in Khartoum. Key senior NCP officials such as Presidential Advisor Dr. Ghazi Sallahedin (empowered to negotiate on bilateral issues, Darfur, and CPA with Special Envoy Gration) and MFA U/S Muttriff Siddiq attended the dinner, which had live music and dancers as a backdrop. (Note: It was clear that the NCP regime wanted to make the best impression possible on Senator Kerry and had put a lot of thought into the visit, as it had for the first visit of Special Envoy Gration. End note.)

16. (C) Ghosh began by discussing CPA issues, but spent most of his time on Darfur. With regard to CPA (and echoing the message delivered by VP Taha) Ghosh requested that the U.S. consider the spirit of the CPA agreement, which advocates for the unity of Sudan. Ghosh said that both elections and the referendum would be held, and confirmed that the NCP would respect the outcome of both the elections and the referendum. He also said the NCP would respect the outcome of the Abyei arbitration currently underway in the Hague. "If people

respect the spirit of the CPA agreement, there will not be a return to war," promised Ghosh. However, Ghosh proceeded to point out that the South is a "security disaster" due to uncontrolled elements of the SPLA and tribal fighting. Ghosh said that the SPLA is acting as a police force, arresting private citizens without due process and on occasion locking them in shipping containers. Nonetheless, Ghosh confirmed that the NCP would respect the outcome of the referendum.

¶17. (C) With regard to Darfur, Ghosh said that the main problems in Darfur at this moment are the JEM rebel group, and inter-tribal fighting among uncontrolled militia. With regard to JEM, Ghosh complained that Chad's President Deby is the primary source of support for JEM, which holds no territory in Darfur and has no constituency. Ghosh pointed out that the international community complains when Sudan supports Chadian rebels, but not when Chad supports JEM. "Why are we not talking about Chadian violations?," asked Ghosh. Ghosh said that President Deby is the principal obstacle to peace, since he "does not want to solve his political problems, but would rather eliminate his opponents instead." Ghosh also complained that the "trend" of Libya is not clear, given its current support to both President Deby and the JEM rebel group.

¶18. (C) Ghosh committed himself to fully implementing the agreement reached with SE Gration on humanitarian access in Darfur. In response to Senator Kerry's concern that the NGOs spent too much time seeking multiple approvals for visas and travel permits, Ghosh said that the government had created a committee to fast-track all approvals for the new NGOs, and that one office had been created where multiple agency approvals could be obtained simultaneously.

¶19. (C) Following the discussion of the NGOs, Ghosh met privately with Senator Kerry.

¶10. (C) Comment: The NCP regime laid out the red carpet for Senator Kerry, the most senior member of the USG to travel to Sudan since Secretary of State Colin Powell in 2005, and the first member of Congress allowed to travel into northern Sudan since spring 2007. The regime is eager for improved

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relations with the U.S., but it remains to be seen whether it can mend its obstructionist ways with regard to humanitarian assistance in Darfur. If we use our leverage to push the regime to fully live up to its commitments on humanitarian access, the Darfur peace process, and CPA implementation, engagement with this untrustworthy regime will be worth the criticism that will no doubt be thrust forward by advocacy groups in the U.S. However, we will need to keep in mind that this is going to be a long process with many ups and downs, which is just now beginning, and that this is a duplicitous regime that must ultimately be judged by actions rather than its words or intentions.

FERNANDEZ